

Gippsland Herd Improvement Co-operative Ltd

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Date

January 2000

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Co-operative Federation of Victoria Ltd

The Gippsland Herd Improvement Co-operative has become a major player in Victoria in the herd improvement industry, following a three-way merger that took place in May 2002.

The shareholders of the former Herd Improvement Co-operative (Maffra) Ltd, South Gippsland Artificial Breeders Co-operative Ltd and the South Gippsland Herd Improvement Co-operative demonstrated overwhelming support for the new entity, giving Gippsland Herd Improvement (GHI) a solid basis from which to grow.

GHI today provides services across the Gippsland region, one of the major dairy areas in Australia. From about 3000 farms, Gippsland provides nearly a third of Victoria's dairy product and some 17.5 percent of the nation's milk.

This illustrates the importance of a vibrant herd improvement industry to serve the local industry.

The merger has enabled GHI to focus on research and development while continuing to provide a wide range of services to its shareholders, which number about 1200. We service those shareholders from our offices, situated at Leongatha and Korumburra in the productive dairy country of South Gippsland, Maffra in the centre of the Macalister Irrigation District and Warragul in the rich agricultural region of West Gippsland

The first year of operation is expected to see GHI employ 100 Gippslanders and turn over more than six million dollars in goods and services to its customers.

Our services

The new Gippsland Herd Improvement Co-operative provides a wide range of services to its shareholders. Those services include:

- Herd Recording
- Artificial Breeding including Sire Selection
- Artificial Insemination
- Breeding Management Reports
- Farm Advisory Service Advice that assists with pasture management, supplementary feeding, fertilisers, stocking rates and calving patterns
- On-Farm Bookkeeping
- Weigh Scales and Calf Dehorning

GHI has also developed and markets the widely-recognised and easy to use dairy farm computer management programs, known as MISTRO. Not only is this software marketed in Australia it is now being sold in New Zealand

The stable of software includes Mistro Farm, Mistro Finance and Mistro Mate, GHI's mating program. A new hand-held palm computer, Mistro Farm Hand, is now also available and offers a high degree of convenience and accuracy for farmers.

Farmers have welcomed the Mistro software because it provides simple access to production and management information for the commercial farmer.

Training

In response to shareholder needs, we provide occasional training courses across a range of agricultural subjects and farming skills. Courses are run for farmers in such areas as breeding and genetics, farm computers and computer software, and off-farm investment. These services are delivered from GHI offices at Leongatha, Maffra and Warragul.

Our Future

One of the great strengths of GHI is the relative strength of each of its member organisations. Herd Improvement Co-operative (Maffra) Ltd, South Gippsland Artificial Breeders Co-operative Ltd and the South Gippsland Herd Improvement Co-operative were solid, efficient businesses that merged at a time of their choosing to create GHI.

This means that the future development of GHI is based on a strong financial and cultural base, with each of the foundation groups contributing local knowledge, skills, experience and a range of services.

The size of the organisation is such that it can develop a better range of services, drawing on the accumulated knowledge of each of the former organisations and their staff, while meeting the particular needs of customers in each region.

The larger organisation also has capacity to lead the industry in use of new technology, particularly building on our existing strengths in herd recording, data capture and farm management. This includes a clear goal to continue to develop our farm computer software, for the benefit of our shareholders and other farmers.

Of course, the basis of our future is our staff. We aim to provide an exceptional work environment to enable employees to continue to develop and enhance our high levels of service.

Our new structure will assist this by, for example, allowing greater opportunity for staff development, then sharing those higher skills across the whole region.

Most importantly, all of these activities will allow GHI to provide better services and an expanded product range to our shareholders, while retaining a strong, vital and farmer-owned co-operative.

OUR VISION

To assist shareholders' to develop their dairy herds to be the world's most profitable.

OUR OBJECTIVES

- *To develop and maintain a sound understanding of the current nature of shareholders' farming enterprises – particularly their aims, expectations and key needs.*
- *To help meet the key needs of shareholders through the development and delivery of well-tailored herd improvement services.*
- *To operate a viable and exciting business that exudes success and confidence, promoting pride amongst shareholders and within the community, and commitment, enthusiasm and loyalty amongst staff.*
- *To recruit and provide training, to maintain high levels of skill and competence of staff and directors.*
- *To provide employees with opportunities to realise their potential and develop within our co-operative.*
- *To be recognised as a leader in the fields of herd improvement service development and delivery.*
- *To work with like-minded organisations.*
- *To achieve sufficient profit to permit growth and development of our Co-operative in keeping with our mission.*

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